

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for monitoring availability of a plurality of units, the method
2 comprising:
3 maintaining a list identifying the plurality of units, such list including a
4 notation indicating whether each such unit is unavailable;
5 accepting an electronic identification of a particular one of the plurality of
6 units;
7 determining whether the list includes the notation that the particular unit is
8 unavailable;
9 automatically modifying the list to remove the notation that the particular unit
10 is unavailable if it is determined that the particular unit is unavailable; and
11 collecting information specifying unavailability of the particular unit if it is
12 determined that the particular unit is not unavailable.

13 2. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising displaying the list.

14 3. The method recited in claim 2 further comprising displaying
15 descriptive headings with the list in a language selected by a user.

16 4. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising displaying only a
17 portion of the list, wherein every unit in the portion includes the notation indicating that such
18 unit is unavailable.

19 5. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising modifying the list to
20 indicate that the particular unit is unavailable in accordance with the collected information.

21 6. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the notation includes a time a
22 specific unit will become available, the method further comprising automatically removing
23 the notation for the specific unit when the time passes.

24 7. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the notation includes a date a
25 specific unit will become available, the method further comprising automatically removing
26 the notation for the specific unit when on that date.

27 8. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the notation included with the
28 list indicates unavailability of each unit for a period less than a day, the method further

3 comprising maintaining a second list identifying a subset of the plurality of units, the second
4 list including a second notation indicating that each unit in the subset is unavailable for a
5 period greater than a day.

1 9. The method recited in claim 8 wherein the list further includes a third
2 notation indicating whether each unit in the list has a corresponding entry in the second list.

1 10. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the plurality of units comprises
2 a plurality of persons.

1 11. The method recited in claim 10 wherein the plurality of persons
2 comprises a plurality of employees of a business organization.

1 12. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the plurality of units comprises
2 a plurality of stations.

1 13. A computer-readable storage medium having a computer-readable
2 program embodied therein for monitoring availability of a plurality of units in accordance
3 with the following:

4 maintaining a list identifying the plurality of units, such list including a
5 notation indicating whether each such unit is unavailable;

6 accepting an electronic identification of a particular one of the plurality of
7 units;

8 determining whether the list includes the notation that the particular unit is
9 unavailable;

10 modifying the list to remove the notation that the particular unit is unavailable
11 if it is determined that the particular unit is unavailable; and

12 collecting information specifying unavailability of the particular unit if it is
13 determined that the particular unit is not unavailable.

1 14. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein
2 the plurality of units comprises a plurality of employees of a business organization.

1 15. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein
2 the plurality of units comprises a plurality of stations.

1 16. A computer system comprising:

a storage device; and

a processor in communication with an input device, a display device, and the storage device, the processor configured to execute instructions for monitoring the availability of a plurality of units in accordance with the following:

- maintaining a list on the storage device identifying the plurality of units, such list including a notation indicating whether each such unit is unavailable;
- accepting an identification from the input device of a particular one of the plurality of units;
- determining whether the list includes the notation that the particular unit is unavailable;
- modifying the list to remove the notation that the particular unit is unavailable if it is determined that the particular unit is unavailable;
- collecting information specifying unavailability of the particular unit if it is determined that the particular unit is not unavailable; and
- displaying the list on the display device.

17. The computer system recited in claim 16 wherein the processor is in communication with a plurality of input devices and with a plurality of display devices.

18. The computer system recited in claim 17 wherein the processor is configured for communication with the plurality of input devices and for communication with the plurality of display devices through a network.

19. The computer system recited in claim 17 wherein the processor is configured for communication with the plurality of input devices and for communication with the plurality of display devices through the internet.